



The Partnership for Transfer Success in USDA Career Majors Program

USDA CSREES Award #2007-38422-18030

2007-2010 \$275,000



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Background Info

Santa Ana College (SAC) is a public community college in the Rancho Santiago Community College District with a total enrollment of 24,402 students (Fall 2006) and a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) with 46% of students identified as Latino. Typically, more than half of entering freshman matriculate from the City of Santa Ana and the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD). The City of Santa Ana is notable because 55% of its 321,147 residents are foreign-born, 79% of residents are Latino, and 76% speak Spanish at home, with 15% of adults (ages 16-64) speaking no English (American Community Survey). Among SAUSD students, most are Latino (92%) and come from low-income homes (72%) (Ed-Data).

Program Summary

Goals of the "Partnership for Transfer Success in USDA Career Majors" program:

- to raise awareness of career options available in USDA-related fields among diverse students
- to attract and retain these students in USDA related majors
- to ensure their successful transfer to a university

The project builds on collaborations with CSU Pomona, UC Irvine, and the local food industry. Activities include guest speakers, a research in food/nutrition course, intensive academic and counseling support, internship/research experiences and financial support for selected students.

Priority Area

The *Partnership for Transfer Success in USDA Career Majors* aims to create a long-term, continuous pool of transfer-ready agriculture or allied program students in order to expand and diversify the workforce, in accordance with the recruitment and retention goals of CSREES priority area 2:

"...to attract and support undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups in order to prepare them for careers related to the food, agricultural, and natural resource systems of the United States, beginning with the mentoring of students at the high school level and continuing with the provision of financial support for students through their attainment of a doctoral degree."

Objectives

Objective 1: Annually promote awareness of USDA related education and career opportunities among 300 Latino and other promising community college students in targeted majors. At least 90% of program participants will indicate an increase in knowledge of and interest in USDA careers as measured by pre and post self-reported data.

Objective 2: Through January 2009, identify 40 motivated students in targeted majors to participate in a cohort program providing focused counseling/support services and an experiential learning opportunity.

Objective 3: By August 2010, 80% of student participants will transfer.

Activities

While career panels and field trips are open to all students, 40 students will be selected for participation in two cohorts that will receive specialized support.

All Students:

Career panels: Professionals, faculty, and current students involved in agriculture-related fields will be invited to SAC for career panels held once each semester.

Field trips: One trip per semester will be offered to Cal Poly, UCI, or a local agriculture/ food business for laboratory/ facility tours, research symposia, and other activities.

Cohort students:

Counseling services: Each student will be required to meet with a program counselor at least once per semester. The counselor will help students develop an education and transfer plan, monitor academic progress, with special attention to gateway math and science courses, and make referrals to appropriate support services.

Transfer Orientation Seminar

All cohort students will enroll in a transfer seminar designed specifically for them. Students will be required to create and maintain a **transfer portfolio** to keep track of transfer milestones, personal statements, letters of recommendation, and other documents to be used during the college and scholarship application process.

FN 263 Introduction to Research Methods

This two unit course will be taught by a Cal Poly faculty member. It meets a nutrition major requirement for Cal Poly or it can be a transferable elective credit. As a part of this course students will develop a proposal which states problem, hypothesis, procedure/method, and data analysis.

Cohort networking meetings will be held two times each semester. At these meetings students will have the opportunity to share their progress, ask transfer questions, learn to write a resume/CV, and discuss current events related to food, agriculture, and natural resources.

Financial Support Pending satisfactory progress, each year cohort students will receive \$600 for **tuition/fees** and books. Upon completion of an internship or research experience, students will receive a **scholarship** of \$1,000 to cover tuition/fees at their designated transfer institution. A special \$25,000 USDA scholarship will be awarded to one outstanding student.

Experiential learning opportunity: Students will be placed in a **research** or **internship** opportunity that will prepare them for USDA-related careers. Opportunities for our students will abound, as we will collaborate with our Service Learning Center, Cal Poly, UCI, and UAL to place students in challenging and rewarding learning opportunities.



Collaborators

California Polytechnic University, Pomona
Dept. of Human Nutrition and Food Sciences
Dr. Douglas Lewis, Chair

University of California, Irvine
Center for Educational Partnerships
Dr. Juan Lara, Asst. Vice Chancellor

USDA Forest Service
Fabian Garcia, Director

United Agribusiness League
Clare Marie Einsmann, Executive Vice President

Selection Criteria

Students participating in the cohort must meet the following criteria:

- major in biology, business, chemistry, mathematics, science, or nutrition and dietetics
 - cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above
 - completion of at least 30 transferable units
 - completion of at least two "golden four" courses
 - enrolled in or completion of Math 80 (Intermediate Algebra)
 - have filed a FAFSA and/or scholarship application
- *The Golden Four are general education courses required by the CSU system for transfer (English, Math, Speech, Critical Thinking).

Recruitment

SAC has a large pool of students already seeking majors of interest to USDA and potential candidates for the cohort program as illustrated in Table 1. Our recruitment strategy thus far has incorporated:

- Transfer Center student drop-ins
- Emails to Transfer Center and related program student list serves
- Email announcement to faculty and hardcopies of program materials in their mailboxes
- Announcements in classrooms
- Posters and flyers

Table 1. SAC Declared Majors, Fall 2007

Declared Major	Count	Declared Major	Count
Biology	458	Fashion	172
Business Administration	1125	Family & Consumer Studies	17
Business Management	673	Marketing	106
Chemistry	116	Mathematics	146
Fashion Design Merchandising	1	Nutrition & Dietetics	84

Implementation Timeline

Project Term: July 2007-June 2010

July/August 2007:

Grant Start-up meeting attended by project management personnel

Hired Transfer Center Specialist assigned to the grant

Developed program materials and documents

Fall 2007:

Steering committee was confirmed and first meeting scheduled

Career Panel scheduled for November. (Attendees include representatives from our collaborators)

Field trip to Cal Poly Pomona scheduled for November. The visit will include a presentation by the agriculture department and facilities tour.

The first cohort of 15 students will start the program in Spring 2008 and transfer in Fall 2009. The second cohort will have 25 students and start in Spring 2009. These students will transfer Fall 2010 (Table 2).

Table 2. Program Timeline

2007-2008			2008-2009			2009-2010		
	Spring	Sum	Fall	Spring	Sum	Fall	Spring	Sum
Cohort I 15	start	-----	-----	-----	end	Transfer		
Cohort II 25				start	-----	-----	-----	end Transfer Fall 2010

Evaluation

The evaluation process will be coordinated by the project director with technical assistance from the RSCCD Department of Institutional Research and a faculty member from the Cal Poly School of Agriculture, Dr. Douglas Lewis. The evaluation will include:

- Pre and Post Participant surveys measuring students' interest in and knowledge of USDA related careers
- Collection of demographic data on student participants
- Student assessment of program components
- Follow-up with students for two years beyond the grant period to further validate success.

The summative evaluation report will discuss the program's impact on improving education. It will include descriptions of quantitative results and how the program met the mission of the college and the identified USDA strategic goals and CREES goals and priorities. It will hopefully show improvement in student retention and transfer. There will be an evaluation of both strengths and weaknesses of the project. The report will be used to suggest programmatic changes and justify changes in staffing, increases or decreases in facilities, or additions of other college resources to sustain this effort.

Beneficiaries & Expected Impact

Students will directly benefit from unique products and opportunities as a result of this project.

- At least 300 underrepresented students will gain awareness of USDA-related careers and educational opportunities.
- 40 students will receive financial support and specialized services.

Broader expected impacts include:

- Participants will contribute a combined total of 1,000 hours of agriculturally-related support to the Santa Ana community.
- SAC faculty and counselors will learn about USDA-related careers and about preparing students for transfer in targeted majors leading to these careers.
- The success of this program will encourage support for student research and internship experiences campus-wide.
- A higher percentage of students will graduate prepared for UC/CSU systems.
- Increase transfer rates of students in targeted majors.

This project will strengthen SAC's ability to train future professionals capable of impacting the nation's nutrition and health, especially within America's largest growing minority group, Latinos; as well as to train researchers that will find solutions to enhance the nation's natural resources and environment, thus meeting the goals of this HSI program.